

European identity constructed through national media: A case study of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine

by

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Abstract (Malene)

The Russian invasion of Ukraine instantly sparked debates on European security, values and collective responsibility. We conducted a thematic analysis on how the most read online newspaper in Greece, the Netherlands and Norway, reported on the invasion from a perspective of promoting a European identity. Drawing on theories of external threats and imagined communities, we understand this disruptive media event through the presence of European narratives aimed to strengthen the solidarity within Europe and portrayed Russia as an external threat. These two factors helped promote a shared European identity.

Keywords

European identity, Russian invasion of Ukraine, imagined communities, external threats, national news media, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, thematic analysis

Introduction (Nikos)

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. The invasion caught much of the international community by surprise and Europe understood it as an attack on its territory, its values and its democracy. How the newsmedia reported on this event is part of a bilateral line of influence of responding to and shaping European identity. News media across Europe called for collective action, shared responsibility and an outrage of frustration against Russian aggression. As theorised by Johan Gottfried Herder and Benedict Anderson, in order to ensure solidarity amongst a group, people must perceive that they share some culture and image of belonging to each other (Polonska-Kimunguy and Kimunguy, 2011). When disruptive media events such as this invasion takes place, the news media is the first responder and information carrier and shape the frames of how it is being perceived by an audience.

What occurrence or phenomenon might affect people on a regular basis, regardless of their nationality, and serve as an opportunity for the development of a "European identity"? This research paper investigates how the national media in Greece, Netherlands, and Norway construct a European identity through the coverage of the Russian-full scale invasion of Ukraine that started on 24 February 2022. National media coverage plays a significant role when a disruptive media event such as this conflict “threatens the establishment and hence force democratic societies to mobilize, reinforce and rethink core values” (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2016, p. 1). Furthermore, the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has also suddenly increased the perceived threat of a potential invasion of other European states. The invasion was unexpected and can be considered an exogenous shock for Europe. According to Gehring (2021), an external military threat can result in a significant increase in a common European identity. However, studying European identity can be challenging as European countries differ tremendously in language, culture, and history. Therefore, our choice to compare the findings of three divergent European countries both geographically and regarding their perception of Europe is reasonable as we assume that “there is not a single

shared, transnational European identity but different national constructions of European identity” (Lichtenstein and Elders, 2019, p. 606).

Our research paper aims to contribute to literature within the fields of European identity, the role of national media in the creation of imagined communities specifically in media disruptive events, and the effect of external threats on strengthening group identity. The way that national media shape European identity has been widely explored mostly through the coverage of European events studied such as EU parliamentary elections, the European Championship, and Eurovision. Additionally, other research has focused on issues that posed external or internal threats to Europe such as climate change and the Eurozone crisis. This paper to the best of our knowledge is the first to research the construction of European identity by investigating the national media coverage of an external military threat. Thus, we hope that our paper is not only covering a pivotal and ongoing event that has transformed the European landscape but can also contribute to further research on the dynamics of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine regarding the development of European identity.

This paper aims to answer the question: *How do national media in the Netherlands, Norway and Greece promote a European identity through their coverage of the full-scale Russian invasion?* In order to answer this, we will firstly review existing literature within the field and present relevant theories. Secondly, we will go into detail on how we conducted our thematic analysis where we analyse 75 articles from a total of three newspapers from Greece, the Netherlands and Norway. Thirdly, we then present our findings in regard to four themes that we identified in our study: European solidarity with Ukraine and showcasing unity against Russia, Russia as an external threat, freedom and democracy as European values, and taking a European perspective rather than national. Fourthly, we discuss our findings in relation to our literature review and theoretical framework. We lastly present our limitations, suggestions for future research and our conclusion.

Literature review and Theoretical Framework

We have identified and will review three broad academic themes that has shaped how our topic has been studied in academia: imagined communities (Anderson, 1983; Calhoun, 2016), external threats and group identity (Gehring, 2021; Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2016), and media in the creation of the European imagined communities (Calhoun, 2016; Toczyski, 2021; Polonska-Kimunguy and Kimunguy, 2011; Lichtenstein & Elders, 2019; Olausson, 2010). In this section we will expand on how these themes have been studied thus far, limitations in studying this field and identify the remaining gaps within the field.

Imagined communities (Sebas)

Our point of departure for this study is Benedict Anderson and his theory on imagined communities. He predominantly used this theory to give a new impulse to the study of nations and nationalism, but we are convinced it is also relevant for our exploration of Europe as a trans-national imagined community.

Anderson (1983) begins by defining modern nations as imagined communities. They are communities because “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (p. 7). This explains, according to Anderson, so many have been willing to die or kill for the nation as it presupposes a bond of profound interconnectedness. Nations are a particular type of community, namely an imagined one. Imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). Nations are all but an exception, says Anderson, as all communities “larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined” (p. 6).

Common denominator of all imagined communities is that members are bound by the same idea or concept, creating mutual fraternisation, identification and solidarity. Equally characteristic is that a level of unfamiliarity exists amongst the members - no single person of the group has met or knows all of the other members. The smaller the group, the easier and more likely it is for members to know one another and to form an actual community.

Anderson presents media like newspapers and novels as tools required to build a sense of community through imagination (Anderson, 1983; Calhoun, 2016). Both are exponents of print capitalism as they are the result of capitalist enterprises trying to grow and make more profit off their written products. According to Anderson, newspapers construct an imagined community not only through their content - think about the celebration of national heroes or the commemoration of national tragedies - but mostly through their ritual value, creating some sort of national belonging and identity. He frames reading the morning newspaper as a “mass ceremony” paradoxically performed in “silent privacy”, “yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion” (p. 35).

This collective ritual of reading the newspaper roughly at the same time during the day, cannot at all be underestimated, says Anderson, as it shows co-members of the community they have this behavior in common and are therefore part of the same group - the nation in this case. Moreover, seeing the physical newspaper in everyday life - at the barbershop, kiosk or your neighbor’s kitchen table - creates a visible connection between our imagination and reality, reassuring the members of the group that the community is real. In the words of Anderson: “fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations” (p. 36).

There are numerous instances of media engaging in community-building through shared imaginations. In the case of so-called ‘media events’ (Dayan and Katz, 1992), “historic occasions - mostly occasions of state - that are televised as they take place and transfix a nation or the world” (p. 1), media seize their moment in shaping national or regional sentiments. Through the coverage of such enormous events, media try to remind society “of what it aspires to be rather than what it is” (p. ix).

Ever since Anderson's publication, other researchers have explored the role of imagined communities beyond the nation-state. In recent times, his theory has been applied to social media. This was researched in a study by Madenoglu (2020) who explored Turks in Germany and their usage of Facebook as a way to connect and get together. She found that members of the Facebook group 'Turks in Germany' form an online imagined community by sharing posts containing religious, nationalistic and diasporic elements. In her own words: "Facebook brings people and the members of the same imagined communities together on a digital platform and reforms the imagined communities on online basis" (Madenoglu, 2020, p. 36). Her research also shows imagined communities can take shapes that go beyond the initial concept of a nation state, for instance in the form of religious, transnational or diasporic imagined communities.

Anderson's theory on imagined communities has set the foundation for an academic debate on group identity and belonging through space and time ever since its publication in 1983. It has fundamentally changed how we understand how humans relate to each other and form connections, both online and offline. As evident in studies such as Madenoglu's study (2020), Anderson's theory continues to inform and inspire fruitful debates and shape our understandings of how communities are formed, even with the developments of new technologies such as social media. This theoretical framework serves as our point of departure for our research and where we aim to situate ourselves in the broader academic debate. Due to the broad nature of Anderson's theory, we will also supplement our theoretical framework with more case study specific theories to substantiate and concretise our debate.

External threats and Group Identity (Nikos)

The effect of external threats on group identification and intergroup cooperation is one topic that has been extensively studied in social psychology. An array of prominent theories such as the social identity theory and the common ingroup identity theory claim that such threats can highly contribute to the strengthening of group identity (e.g. Giles & Evans, 1985; Tajfel et al., 1979).

The German sociologist Georg Simmel (2010) suggested that a common danger can be essential for groups that aren't homogenous in order to remain united. The concept of group identity is flexible and adaptive to the context, including adjustment to different types of external challenges (Amartya Sen, 2007).

"The Group-Based Control Theory hypothesizes that when personal control is endangered by a threat, individuals will identify more with groups that they perceive as valuable to restore their sense of control" (Correll & Park, 2005 as cited in Gehring, 2021, p. 6). When a group confronts a threat, its members may tend to support actions beneficial for the group's needs, even if it comes with personal costs (Weisel & Zultan, 2016).

These psychological theories can have significant implications regarding group identity at a state level in the international politics field. According to Montesquieu (1777), one question

that can be raised is whether republics consisting of sub-groups and individuals voluntarily together, need a constant sense of external danger to maintain their unity

The relationship between external threats and international relations can be understood better through the balance of power theory. “It is one of the most influential theoretical ideas in the field which has attracted more scholarly effort than any other single proposition about international politics”. (Wohlforth et al., 2007, p.155).

Although there are many different versions and definitions of the theory, its fundamental base suggests that” hegemonies do not form in multistate systems because perceived threats of hegemony generate balancing behavior by other leading states in the system” (Levy, 2004, p. 37 as cited in Wohlforth et al., 2007, p. 156). This procedure can occur externally by forming coalitions, internally by increasing their own capabilities, or both. (Mearsheimer, 2001; Waltz, 1979). Less powerful states do not necessarily balance against the most powerful, but rather against those that seem to pose the greatest threat (Walt, 1987, p. 263).

According to Gehring (2021) we can consider an external military threat as “common to all members of a larger political unit if it relates to tensions between that unit and an external power, and if an attack would endanger the territorial integrity of the unit” (p. 5). He suggests that depending on the level of identification within the states an attack in one of them can be interpreted as a direct threat for the union of states and “strengthen that common identity, trust, and cooperation”.

States confronting a common powerful adversary can cooperate or integrate. If they are reasonably powerful, cooperation might be enough to achieve balance, however, if they are minor powers, they consider integration by organizing their efforts as efficiently as possible. In this case, they establish common institutions with a central authority tasked with facilitating their balancing efforts (Rosato, 2011, p. 49-50).

Rosato predicted that the Europeans were “unlikely to take any real steps toward establishing a stronger political or military community as long as there were no significant changes in the balance of power” (Rosato 2011, p. 48). An external threat could strengthen EU identity by increasing the weights its citizens assign to attributes that all group members have in common (Gehring, 2021). In such a case, citizens in EU states would be recategorized “as us in contrast to them” (Turner et al., 1994, p. 456). The external threat would “reduce perceptions of intergroup dissimilarities” (Vezzali et al., 2015, p. 521) and increase “the alignment with overarching entities, fostering the willingness to cooperate” (Gaetner, 2012).

In his research paper, Gehring (2021) tested this mechanism on the effect of Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014. Considering the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014 as a new external military threat that could alter the European states’ balance of power he used large-scale individual-level survey data from Eurobarometer. His research finds that the external threat by Russia caused an overall increase in European identity in EU member states (p. 30).

His findings are in line with psychological theories regarding external threats where the strengthening of group identity “is not purely instrumental and related only to higher benefits from protection but also causes changes in psychological attitudes, in particular higher trust in EU institutions and a positive effect on support for common EU policies” (p. 2). “An increase in identity is at least partly not a conscious decision but reflects automatic processes and a largely automatic attempt to restore a subjective sense of control” (Fritzsche et al 2011, p. 101-102).

Disruptive Media events (Nikos)

Traumatic events such as war, disaster, and terror are characterized as disruptive media events and represent more profound challenges for the media than elite-driven, integrative ceremonial media events (Dayan & Katz, 1992).

National media, however, retain their significance and this is especially when a disruptive media event “threatens the establishment and hence force democratic societies to mobilize, reinforce and rethink core values (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2016, p. 1). “Consequently, disruptive media events require an immediate, coordinated response from key institutions in society, placing high demands on political authorities and legacy media organizations to maintain and reestablish control” (Katz & Liebes 2007; Nossek, 2008).

Most studies have underlined how the mainstream media often take on a ritual function after terror, with an emphasis on togetherness, solidarity, support for national authorities, and shared and establishment values (Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou, 2016, p. 1-2). They suggest that “in the aftermath of terror, the media play a key role as meaning makers, guardians of appropriate discourse, and facilitators of critical debates.”

From this perspective, journalism plays a central role in the “maintenance of society through time, representing shared beliefs, understandings, and emotions” (Riegert & Olsson, 2007, p. 144). “In the reporting about traumatic events including such mediatized rituals this societal maintenance role becomes central as a way to move whole populations from trauma to recovery through questions of identity, touching upon communal boundaries” (Allan & Zelizer, 2011; Cottle, 2006 as cited by Bødker & Ngomba (2017, p. 581).

This is partially verified by Figenschou and Thorbjørnsrud (2016) research which focuses on how one traumatic event challenged editorial practices, routines and norms related to editorial control and open debate in multiple formats and platforms in major Norwegian media organizations. Their findings document that in their online comment sections, media organizations all moved towards a more interventionist policy utilizing various methods and measures to gain control of the online debate (p. 12). Although in the traditional op-ed formats, media expanded selectively and carefully the range of voices, they also included actors deemed too extreme prior to the attacks, opening up the sphere of legitimate controversy (p. 13).

In their research Bødker and Ngomba (2017) set out to examine constructions of community and belonging in the reports about the February 2015 shooting incident in Copenhagen when a gunman attacked a public event. Based on a thematic analysis of one month of coverage of two Danish newspapers they found that the media reaction was almost immediately marked by patterns of showcasing solidarity, unity, and criticism/conflict which succeeded each other quicker than compared to what other scholars have found (p. 589).

Furthermore, their study also highlights that during moments of disruptive events like domestic terrorist attacks, “journalists and politicians engage in a discursive tug-of-war in which both act out the theatrics of unity and solidarity while demonstrating calculative impatience to move beyond such limited, scripted role enactments” (p. 589). Regarding issues of community and its relationship with values and ideologies, “journalists, politicians, and opinion leaders were engaged in the construction of “hierarchies of belonging” (p. 589).

Media and European identity (Malene)

With the rise of television, radio, digital newspapers and later on, social media, many scholars have been fascinated by how the media we consume influence how we understand the society around us and what role we play in it. This has sparked academic debates on the relationship between identity and media, and how they influence each other. Drawing on Johan Gotfried Herder’s theory, Polonska-Kimunguyi and Kimunguyi (2011) argued that media is an expression of culture, and it is therefore a powerful source for identity formation.. As with studying any expression of culture, that being art, movies, or newspapers, there is always a need to study media as part of a larger context of influencing factors that are constantly changing and redefined (Polonska-Kimunguyi & Kimunguyi, 2011; Williams & Piazza, 2012; Varga 2011). The nature of this academic debate has therefore been to make sense of these relationships and understand them in their given dynamic and ever-changing context (Jameson, 1995 as cited in Olausson, 2010).

Though the high-context-based nature of the relationship between media and identity has opened for profound debates on belonging, identity and community for decades, it also poses some challenges of measurability. Asking a sample group about how much they feel like they identify with a group (that being a nation or a gender expression), one might find themselves with many different answers that cannot easily be compared to each other. There is no tangible scale for measuring identity, it is usually expressed in words with interpretive descriptions (Olausson, 2010; Lichtenstein, & Eilders, 2019; Polonska-Kimunguyi & Kimunguyi, 2011; Varga 2011). Theories on media and identity, such as Anderson’s imagined community, can only confirm a relationship between the two, without giving any specific direction of this relationship or how it takes shape (1991). This has made research on it almost exclusively qualitative and by assessing specific case studies in their given context (Bødker & Ngomba, 2018).

When studying identity in the context of Europe specifically, researchers are met with particular challenges. In 2012, Williams and Piazza published a study that discussed different definitions of Europe and what different implications each of them have. Their study

highlighted the complex matter of understanding Europe as an entity as its definitions vary depending which perspective of Europe they understand it from. Olsson (2010) also highlighted the significant changes Europe has undergone in the past few decades. The iron curtain divided Europe in two, then Europe decided to increase international collaboration and gave birth to the European Union. Today, we face a range of regional issues such as covid, energy crisis, climate crisis and, of course, the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Essentially, how we understand Europe impacts how we assess the identities existing within it. Williams and Piazza interestingly pointed out that in academia, Europe is often understood as a dynamic concept that changes through time and space by the people who are situated in it.

Our literature review has demonstrated that the concrete mechanisms used by national media in Europe to create a collective European identity remains significantly understudied. As European-wide media serves the purpose of alternative media with a specific target audience, the national media remains the most influential news media in shaping a European narrative of issues affecting the entire region. Understanding how European identity is formed in these news outlets can help us understand how we should engage with this media and use it as a piece in a puzzle of combating regional issues for the time to come. This is why our study focuses on how national media engage with regional issues, in our case the Russian invasion of Ukraine, from a European perspective in order to find pan-European solutions.

Research design (Malene)

Our literature review demonstrated that research on the relationship between media and identity predominantly uses qualitative approaches due to the changing and subjective nature of identity. We have therefore decided to align our study with the dominating methodology within this field by conducting a qualitative thematic analysis. This will allow us to identify different themes of European identity in the reporting of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in three national media outlets across Europe. This section will provide a detailed account of how we conducted our research and how we tackled the challenges of studying European identity through digital newspapers.

In order to gain a coherent impression of how European identity is constructed in media in Europe, we decided to analyse one digital newspaper from three European countries, each with a different relationship to Europe: the Netherlands, Greece and Norway. The Netherlands is situated at the core of the EU, centrally located on continental Europe which makes them closely connected to Europe politically, culturally, and economically. Greece's relationship with Europe is a more complicated one. The historically and culturally unique country of South Europe became part of EU in 1981. After negative publicity related mostly to the financial crisis, that occurred in the early 2009, there have been many that classified Greece as a problematic EU partner. Various Eurobarometers reports on 2022 show that Greeks perceive EU membership worse and trust EU institutions less comparing to most of European countries while they are the most pessimistic country about the future of EU. It is worth noting that according to a Eurobarometer's report about the level of approval for the

EU'S action to support Ukraine Netherlands (93%) ranks second in the list while Greece is in the last place with 49%. Norway, on the other hand, has never joined the EU, but is a member state of the European Economic Area (EEA) that binds the EU, Norway, as well as Iceland and Lichtenstein to a single market. This has connected Norway to economic activities in Europe though it remains more separate from the European political landscape. Our aim is to collect articles from one national media from each of these three countries to obtain a balanced impression of how European identity is being constructed in newspapers from across the continent.

Each year, the Reuters Institute releases a report on the digital news landscape in 46 countries. This report gives a detailed account of trends in news consumption across the globe. It also includes a list of the most read digital newspaper in each country, including the Netherlands, Greece and Norway. The latest 2022 list informed our decision on what news outlet we would use for this research. This decision, however, came with a few challenges. The Netherlands, Greece and Norway have significantly different media landscapes with different sources of news consumption, making it difficult to find outlets that are comparable to each other. Norway and the Netherlands each have a strong state-owned media broadcaster (NRK and NOS respectively) that are both important sources of news, whilst Greece only has privately owned newspapers. Therefore, we decided to eliminate all broadcasters from the list and focus only on newspapers. In this way, we ended up with private newspapers that are read both online and in paper. We hoped that this would make our findings closer to the national narrative as possible, and comparable to each other. As a result, the list from the Reuters Institute report suggested that we should use *Algemeene Dagblad* (AD) in the Netherlands, *Verdens Gang* (VG) in Norway and *Proto Thema* in Greece.

From each of these three newspapers, we collected 25 articles from the two immediate weeks after the invasion, 24 February 2022 to 9 March 2022, from the digital archive of each of the newspapers. This gave us a total of 75 articles. Bødker and Ngomba wrote that when studying disruptive media event, the initial response by the media functions as the “establishment of frames” where the frames in which this event will be reported through in the future are shaped (2018, p. 582). Studies have used different time frames following a disruptive media event, often between one and two weeks. Since this event was an invasion, we decided to use a rather longer definition of “initial phase” to also catch up on some early developments of the invasion. The articles we used were found the following keywords (in the given language of the newspapers): “Russian invasion”, “Europe Ukraine”, “War Ukraine” and “Europe”.

The 75 selected articles were analyzed following the step-by-step guide indicated by Braun and Clarke (2006) on how to do qualitative thematic analysis. This involved reading the different articles closely and several times to look for central themes in the light of the main research questions and analytical aims, collecting different units of the data into potential themes, reviewing, defining, and naming these themes through a “recursive process” of back-and-forth movement with the data and discussions between the authors (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Then, the articles were analysed using a codebook where the articles

were categorised based on four themes: (1) Showcasing European solidarity with Ukraine, (2) Freedom and democracy as European values, (3) Taking a European point of view rather than a national one, and (4) Russia as an external threat. These four categories emerged after discussions amongst the authors after data collection where we discussed shared themes in our findings.

Methodology (Nikos)

The 75 published articles of our dataset were subjected to a qualitative thematic analysis which “is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Our findings were subjected to comparative analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences in the coverage of the Russian full-scale invasion by the national media of Greece, Netherlands, and Norway, as well as to allow us to discover broader patterns and trends (Landman & Carvalho, 2016).

We chose thematic analysis as the primary method for our research as it is an “accessible and theoretically flexible approach” (Braun & Clarke, 2006) for analyzing qualitative data and therefore identifying how different patterns and meanings regarding the shaping of European identity were embedded in media coverage. Similarly, Gutsche and Salkin (2016) point out, that qualitative thematic analysis is an important approach for “identifying how cultural themes and meanings are embedded in news texts” (p. 459-460) and, as such, this method aligns with the analytical goals of our research.

A theme should “capture something important about the data in relation to the research question and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set”. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), it is crucial for researchers to determine the type of thematic analysis that they want to follow in relation to their data set. A deductive approach, otherwise called ‘theoretical’ thematic analysis tends to be driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the area while an inductive approach means the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83; Patton, 1990).

We decided to follow a mixed-methods approach using initially our pre-existing theoretical framework to guide the analysis and the creation of the themes. Following our data collection, we continued with an inductive approach as we identified new themes which we added to our coding frame. We believe that with this approach, the themes we identified, coded, and analyzed present a more accurate reflection of the content of the entire data set.

Furthermore, we decided take on a thematic analysis at the latent level “which goes beyond the semantic content of the data and aims to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualizations, and ideologies that shapes and inform it” (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 84).

Findings

In this section we will present our findings in relation to the four themes we identified after data collection: (1) Showcasing European solidarity with Ukraine, (2) Freedom and democracy as European values, (3) Taking a European point of view rather than a national one, and (4) Russia as an external threat.

Greece (Nikos)

The sample of 25 articles from the Greek newspaper Proto Thema is composed of an array of news reports that covers the full-scale invasion of Russian invasion of Ukraine from different perspectives. Popular topics are the consequences of the war for Greece and Europe, military and humanitarian support to Ukraine, and the coverage of significant military events during the invasion. Opinion-based articles and personal views of journalists are rarely included in these news reports. Therefore, in terms of promoting European identity, the sample must be analyzed by focusing on the way that Proto Thema chose to report the events that unfolded in the first two weeks and the hidden narratives beyond this coverage. Most articles (17 articles) were published in the first week after the invasion, with only 8 articles published in the second week.

European solidarity with Ukraine/ showcasing unity against Russia

European solidarity towards Ukraine and unity against Russia was the dominant theme in the coverage of the Russian full scale invasion of Ukraine by the Greek national media, Proto Thema. The media reproduced an array of statements from representatives of European Institutions and political leaders of European countries. Their statements emphasize the need for a unified European response, immediate measures to support Ukraine and sanctions against Russia, and an intensive mobilization of effort to provide aid to eastern EU member states and Ukrainian refugees.

A representative example can be found in the article *Anger in Athens over the 10 dead expatriates* which reports the statements of French President Macron “There is not only Ukrainian people that grieve today because of the war that Russia caused but all the nations of Europe”. Similarly, the article *The closure of EU airspace to Russia announced by the President of the Commission* gives emphasis to the statements of the High Representative of the European Commission, Josep Borell, such as: “We welcome with open arms the Ukrainians who must escape Putin's bombs, and I am proud of the warm welcome they have received from Europeans”.

The article *Ambiguous statements by Arvanitis regarding the Russian invasion* reports the statements of the ruling government's party “New Democracy” spokesperson to a social media post of a member of the European Parliament and of the opposition party “Syriza” in which he didn't condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine and suggested to keep an equal distance from the two countries. Statements such as “These are critical times for Europe, humanity, and our country, unity, and seriousness are required” and “Greece supports the rules of international law and coordinates with its partners and allies for a joint response.”

showcase the alignment of the Greek government's policy with the frequent reporting of European solidarity narratives by Proto Thema.

Furthermore, various articles portray the support of European nations to Ukraine with different means including military, humanitarian, and medical supplies. It is worth noting that they depict an image of a decisive European aid towards Ukraine, especially by highlighting the importance of specific countries which contributed with their efforts.

For example, the article *Even Switzerland broke neutrality to impose sanctions on Russia* emphasizes with its title that even the traditionally neutral in conflicts, Switzerland, took the side of Ukraine, becoming part of the European collective response. In a similar manner the article *Dramatic images of dead civilians in the streets from the bombing* presents the historical significance of help from "countries such as Germany, which lifted the general ban on sending weapons to a war zone, and Sweden, which had not sent weapons systems since 1939, made a difference".

Russia as an external Threat for Europe

Through the words of Proto Thema's journalists and the reproduction of various statements of political European leaders, Russia is depicted as a significant external threat to Europe in the majority of the articles.

War language is frequently used against Russia with various words like "perpetrators", "Russian aggression", "criminal acts" and reproduction of statements from different European political leaders like "Bombs don't fall by themselves. Someone drops them", "Russia violated every rule of international law" and "Russian toxic and harmful misinformation in Europe". The reporting creates the feeling that Russia poses a serious military threat not only to Ukraine but to the whole European continent's stability and security.

Except for the language that is used, three main narratives in the reporting point out Russia as an external danger to Europe, the historically expansive policy of Russia, the potential Russian revenge on European countries that support Ukraine, and the nuclear threat.

In the article *In the Ukrainian language the message of Charles Michel: Glory to Ukraine* the statements of the president of the European Council "Moscow might expand its hostile actions and launch future attacks on Moldova and Georgia" express fear of a further Russian invasion of European countries. According to the reporting of other articles, the main objectives of Russian President Vladimir Putin are "war and, by extension, the annexation of territory and the unquenchable desire for the old, great Russia".

Moreover, the possibility of Russia seeking revenge from the countries that decided to provide military support in Ukraine is represented through articles that report the statements of European and Russian political leaders. Warnings from the Russian Foreign Ministry such as "EU citizens and countries involved in the supply of lethal weapons and fuel to the Ukrainian Armed Forces will be responsible for any consequences and from the French Minister of Armed Forces, Florence Parly, that "We are countries bound by a solidarity pact

and Russia knows that if one of us were attacked, the whole Alliance would retaliate” showcase the possibility of a new Russian attack to European territory and the escalation of war as a realistic scenario that could emerge shortly, making the threat even more dangerous.

Additionally, several articles point out the nuclear threat that Russia poses to Europe and the world. While through the reporting, nuclear weapons are depicted mostly as a pre-emptive threat, there are various sentences such as “the possibility of a new Chernobyl”, “the alarm has been raised about Putin’s nuclear ambition” and “intentions to enrich the Russian nuclear program” that seems to magnify the possibility of their use on purpose or by accident.

Freedom and Democracy as European values

Freedom and democracy depicted as European values were not an unusual phenomenon in the coverage of the media. The protest in Greece against the Russian invasion of Ukraine is portrayed as “an independent citizens initiative calling for support on friends of freedom and democracy in our country”.

Similarly in an article reporting the symbolic illumination of two areas of Athens with the national colors of Ukraine, the post of the Mayor of Athens, Kostas Bakoyannis in social media is reproduced "The struggle for democracy, for peace, for life is sacred and universal. Athens, true to its history and tradition, stands by the small and large cities, to the friendly Ukrainian people".

Several articles highlight that Ukraine is “a whole country, a European democracy under siege by a “dictator” and a country fighting for its “free future” . The right of Ukraine for “self-defense and territorial sovereignty” is frequently emphasized. Statements from European political leaders, show that “Ukraine is a country that belongs among us”, “a victory for Ukraine would be a great victory for democracy and freedom” and “Ukraine gives inspiration to all Europe”.

Taking a European point of view rather than a national one

The coverage of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Proto Thema was balanced between reporting a national and a European point of view. In the first days of the war, the majority of the articles represent the national viewpoint. This includes statements from Greek politicians, protests, and illustrations of national buildings in the colors of Ukraine, refugees arriving in the country, and the danger for Greek citizens living in Ukraine.

However, we notice a change in the reporting with articles taking a more European viewpoint as the invasion continues. That maybe could be explained by the fact that Europe was caught in shock and didn’t have an immediate united reaction or because the invasion was a new reality for the media.

When it became clear that the Greek government’s policy would align with European support for Ukraine, articles focusing more on Europe’s solidarity and collective response to Ukraine started to emerge more frequently. Especially after the first five days of the coverage, there

are various articles focusing mostly on the actions of other European countries, and statements by EU institutions and European political leaders.

The article with the title *Poll: 51% of Greeks support Ukraine, 15% support Russia*, presents polls of the Greek public opinion regarding the invasion. While the polls show that half of the Greek population stands with Ukraine in the war and less than one-fifth with Russia, the feelings of Greek public opinion about the military aid that the country provided to Ukraine are mixed. In the article, we read that “According to the poll results, the majority of Greeks (54%) do not support sending military material to the war in Ukraine, compared to 46%.”

It is worth noting that there are only three articles that give voice to or reproduce statements that present different opinions about where Greece should stand regarding the invasion or criticize European actions. The vast majority of articles follow the mainstream narrative and the government’s policy that Greece should support Ukraine and participate in the European collective response against the invasion. However, the public opinion of the Greek population does not seem to be fairly represented in the coverage, at least for decisions such as the dispatch of military supplies to Ukraine, three days after the invasion.

The Netherlands (Sebas)

All 25 articles gathered from the Dutch newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad (AD)* in the period of February 24th to March 9th were spread out quite evenly over the two weeks. Every day except for March 6th and 7th an article was published and generally the limit of 3 articles per day was not crossed. Only on March 8th 6 articles were published, marking a clear break in the trend. The AD sample comprises both short news articles and longreads with room for views from experts who interpret relevant events. Majority of the articles - 21 to be exact - go into the direct responses from Europe and The Netherlands to the Russian full-scale invasion and the consequences it has for them. Popular themes in this context are the receipt of Ukrainian refugees and the, at that time, looming energy and food crisis. Only 2 articles give a more elaborate account of Ukraine and what was happening there.

European solidarity with Ukraine and showcasing unity against Russia

Similar to the case of the Greek media outlet *Promo Thema*, ‘European solidarity with Ukraine’ was the most frequently detected theme in Dutch news outlet *Algemeen Dagblad (AD)*. The theme appeared in 11 out of 25 analyzed news articles, occupying a prominent place in the national newspaper’s coverage.

The European inclusiveness towards Ukraine becomes particularly apparent in AD’s coverage of the welcoming of Ukrainian refugees by Dutch society. Multiple articles are dedicated to the Dutch and European openness to the receipt of Ukrainians who have to flee their country due to Russia’s invasion. In one of them, a Dutch state secretary responds with the following words to the decision of the EU to grant Ukrainian refugees a special status that gives them access to work, education and medical facilities: “The message that is important now is: we stand in solidarity with you and if you come to The Netherlands, you will be

given shelter here.” Other telling articles in this context show how local Dutch communities are making efforts to accommodate Ukrainian refugees. One of these articles contains a powerful image of Dutch firefighters putting together cots for Ukrainian baby’s (see picture 1).

Picture 1



Source: *(Cots are also assembled in the sports hall)*

The newspaper’s focus is not only on Ukrainians coming to The Netherlands, but also on, for example, a Dutch woman who voluntarily left to fight in the war on the Ukrainian side. She said in an interview that “you should not leave your fellow human out in the cold”. Besides, we can also see solidarity amongst European colleagues is given attention by AD, for example in the case of Dutch firefighters. They have sent their fire suits and other useful equipment en masse to their fellow Ukrainian firefighters.

Another way in which AD creates a narrative of Europe’s solidarity with Ukraine, is the portrayal of Europe as a united front against Europe. The newspaper published, for instance, a photo collection of protests against the war, taking place all across Europe (see picture 2, 3 and 4). Moreover, it compiled a comprehensive list of all the European companies cutting their ties with Russia, from the European football federation UEFA excluding Russian teams from all competitions to aircraft manufacturer Airbus no longer supplying parts to Russian airlines. Finally, the newspaper reports on how more than 100 radio stations in Europe - including radio stations in Ukraine - simultaneously played John Lennon's song Give Peace A Chance. A spokesperson of a Dutch radio station notes: “Music comforts, supports and connects. With this initiative, we are letting music speak throughout Europe: give peace a chance.”

Picture 2



Source: *In Lisbon, protesters gathered at the Russian embassy*

Picture 3



Source: *A protest against the invasion of Ukraine took place in Amsterdam today.*

Picture 4



Source: *In Warsaw, demonstrators took part in a large protest march.*

Russia as an external Threat for Europe

In AD's coverage of the invasion, we have only been able to identify three articles that contain elements of the portrayal of Russia as an external threat. An example of how AD has depicted Russia as an external threat is an article on Dutch Defence spending. Voices in the Parliament advocate for a firm raise in military expenditures now that Russia has posed an imminent threat to European, and thus Dutch, security. The Dutch Minister of Defence confirms this by saying that "the current war in Ukraine shows that the threats are real and close." After that we can read quotes of the Prime Minister who is backing her with the following words: "We are one in our rejection of this war. From an aggressor who crosses new borders every day and does not even shy away from nuclear threats." With 'we' the Prime Minister is referring to, amongst others, the European Union and the United Kingdom, providing us with an obvious cue that it is us - a unified Europe - against them - the aggressor Russia.

Freedom and Democracy as European values

In two of the AD articles, it is mentioned that Ukraine lives according to so-called 'European values', referring to values such as freedom and democracy. AD portrays Ukraine as a free and democratic country, which supports its narrative of Ukraine as culturally part of Europe.

In one article, a so-called Eastern Europe expert, who is a linguist and journalist in one, is given the floor. He claims that "Ukraine has developed into a democratic country. Admittedly chaotic and corrupt, but it is a democracy where people live in freedom." In a second article, we see quotes of the Dutch Prime Minister commenting on the fact that the Western sanctions imposed on Russia, will also have economic consequences for the Netherlands: "If that is the price of security and freedom, we should be prepared to pay that price." In the same article, a reproduction of a statement of the President of the Dutch Chamber is featured: "This is a tipping point in European history, an attack on peace, security and democracy." They all follow the same strategy, which is making clear that Ukraine is free and democratic and therefore belongs to Europe.

Taking a European point of view rather than a national one

In 8 articles we found the journalists from AD take a European point of view instead of a Dutch one. We can roughly divide these articles into four categories. The first one being the framing of Ukrainian refugees as a European challenge rather than a Dutch one. "Europe prepares for refugee influx from Ukraine", is the title of one of the published pieces. In a poignant witness account, the journalist made the choice to phrase Polish and Romanian border posts as "European border posts", thereby making it more of a European affair instead of a Polish or Romanian issue.

Similar framing is happening in articles that shed a light on the debate revolving around the European energy shortage as a consequence of the war. The narrative that Europe is dependent on Russia for its oil and gas, recurs regularly. For example, the Minister of Climate and Energy is quoted saying Europe will receive 40 percent less gas when it decides to end

relationships with Russia. According to that same minister, it is vital Europe becomes energy-independent “at a much higher pace”. In a final article, a chief economist warns Europe for what’s to come: “I think we should seriously consider a recession in Europe.”

We also found one specific story about a pasta crisis in Italy as a consequence of Russia's invasion into Ukraine. The article deals with pasta companies that have seen a shortage of grain from Ukraine and Russia, posing a threat to their operational processes. Though at first sight it seems like a story with a limited European relevance, the nature of the article is quintessentially pan-European. It approaches a seemingly national issue in such a way that it becomes ‘our’ - a Dutch - problem too. Just the decision to publish it in a Dutch newspaper is a sign that the newspaper and its readers care about what happens in Italy, a fellow European country. The article might not be written from a European angle, covering what happens in Italy as if it is a region in your own country does benefit a shared European sentiment. The journalist even takes a European point of view with the following sentence: “if the war in Ukraine continues for a long time, it could well lead to empty supermarket shelves, including in other parts of Europe.”

Finally, multiple articles have been dedicated to the port of Rotterdam and its strategic position in a potential all-out war. Interestingly, instead of focussing on the harbor’s strategic value for The Netherlands, the journalists have chosen to frame its value in light of European interests. In the words of a strategic analyst:

The port of Rotterdam is a central transit point in Europe for material from the United States. If you shut down ports or sea routes, it is like squeezing an artery. You can put military personnel on a plane, but all the heavy stuff goes by sea. So an attack on a major port is a logical way to intercept the transport of material from the United States to Europe. (*“Where can we shelter if the port is targeted? ‘Shelters are often more damaging than outside’”*)

Phrases like this, in which the European perspective takes center stage, appear more than once in the articles, suggesting AD is looking beyond the Dutch borders.

Norway (Malene)

The sample of 25 articles from the Norwegian newspaper *Verdens Gang* (VG) is composed of different types of articles. From our given time frame, February 24th to March 9th, we collected the most articles were collected on the day of the invasion, and makes up 6 out of the 25 articles. For the other 13 days, between 0-3 articles were collected from each day. Perspectives of the Russian invasion on Ukraine and its impact on Norway, Ukraine and Europe. The sample contains a mixture of factual news articles and opinion based articles. 19 of the articles focused on the developments of the invasion to inform readers on what was happening in Ukraine and how the international community (mostly ‘Europe’, NATO or the EU) and Norway responded to that. 3 articles were analyses and reflection on the war and reflected external authors and journalists’ personal points of views. The three remaining articles were leaders, written by the editor of VG and reflects the newspaper’s views. The

latter category was particularly interesting for our research as it offered an explicit articulation of a widely read online newspaper.

European solidarity with Ukraine and showcasing unity against Russia

14 articles in the Norwegian sample explicitly encouraged Europe to stand in solidarity with Ukraine as a response to Russia's aggression. Same as with Proto Thema and AG, this is the most common theme in VG. Half the articles reported on the need for collective action and how to do so, and concerned fields such as energy, migration, security, ammunition support for Ukraine and peace talks. The general aim of this collective action appeared to be to sustain as normal life as possible in Europe in the aftermath of the invasion and to showcase a united front against Russia.

Of these 14 articles, 4 of them specifically encouraged protection of Ukrainian refugees that were expected to arrive at other European nations. The coverage by VG called for action on all levels from a national administrative level to tips on how ordinary people could welcome Ukrainian refugees in their daily lives. The article *A refugee crisis that unites Europe* further highlights the importance of regional collaboration and hope that with better bureaucratic solutions for refugees, Europe will grow stronger and more interconnected. The article finishes with "Let us make the Ukraine war to the story that strengthened solidarity and unity in Europe". These quotations push for a collective protection of refugees as a way of showing solidarity and compassion with Ukraine. The emphasis on regional solution aims to protect refugees and to ensure stability on the European continent, providing a mutually benefiting narrative.

In light of international cooperation, the article *Circulated by gas-thirsty Europeans* highlights the mutual benefits of a bilateral collaboration between Norway and Denmark to sustain gas supply in both countries. Another example is the article *Moldovan President: We need help quickly* which explains on how the security situation is changing in Moldova and how this is also a threat to Europe. The main argument here is that helping Moldova is helping Europe because it is an interconnected and united geopolitical entity. These articles serve as examples of how international collaboration is heightened in Europe as a response to the war and how it can be used to ensure peace and stability. This narrative is central in VG's reporting and can also be found their use of pictures, such as depicted in Picture 7, in where "welcome" is written in Dutch supported by a Ukrainian flag.

Picture 7



Source: *A refugee crisis that unites Europe*

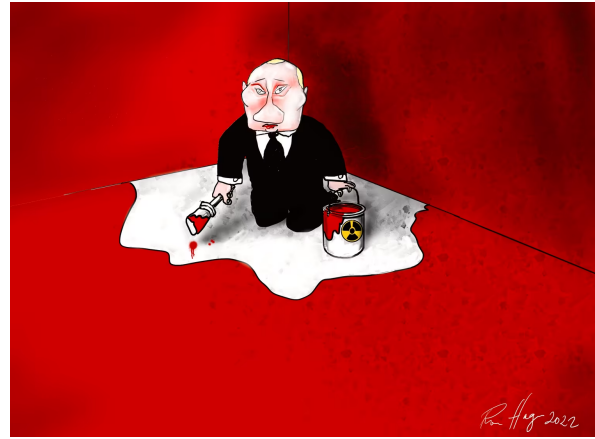
Russia as an external threat

The third most common theme found in the sample was the portrayal of Russia as an external threat. 7 out of the 25 articles portrayed Russia as the enemy of Europe that poses direct security threats to the whole continent. Particularly interesting for this analysis is the article titled *Putin unites the west* which offers a critical analysis of NATO and EU on their failures to unite the West and that the invasion of Ukraine has forced these western international institutions to make a united front against Russia. Not only does the war highlight the ideological differences between Russia and Europe, but it has also economically isolated Russia whilst fuelling international cooperation within Europe across multiple sectors. The closing statement of the same article sums up this argument neatly: “while the West is not always aligned in what we stand for, no one no longer hesitates about what we stand against”. This argument is further elaborated in an article with an interview with the Norwegian war expert, Palle Ydstebø, where he argues that “He [Putin] has managed to connect Europe, connect NATO, [and] repair the transatlantic cleavage created by Donald Trump.” These two articles argue that though the west is split on many issues, the war has forced them to find common ground by offering an external threat.

More specifically, president Valdimir Putin is portrayed as the main facilitator of the Russian invasion and has therefore become the embodiment of Russian aggression. Words like “unpredictable”, “insane”, and “aggressive” are used to describe the Russian president and frames him as a reckless and unpredictable leader. In some articles, *Putin* and *Russia* are used interchangeably to describe the lonely corner Russia and their very few allies have put themselves into. Some articles used illustration by Roar Hagen as its header photo. These often carried a political message that highlighted the argument in some of the leaders in the sample.

Picture 5

Picture 6



Source: *It's serious now. Russia's invasion of Ukraine brings Europe into a new era and A dangerous era where no European can roam for granted and Putin unites the west*

In Picture 5, Putin is portrayed as an atomic bomb eating from a plate where Ukraine is on the menu. The people around him are previous Russian leaders, portrayed with a discontent face. Picture 6 is the heading picture in the article *Putin unites the west* where the author claims that Putin has “painted himself into a corner” by miscalculating who his allies would be after the invasion. Simultaneously, there is a sense of humour in the illustrations. The very tight shirt in Picture 5 and the mere fact that Putin painted himself into a corner shapes a depiction of him as a clowny and unrelatable person. This framing of Putin alienates him and his action, further accentuating the threat he poses to Europe.

Freedom and Democracy as European values

Our theme of freedom and democracy as European values was the least common in the Norwegian sample. Only 4 articles had this narrative. Nonetheless, these articles discuss Russia as a threat not only for security reasons but also for the democratic ideology in Europe on a more profound level. When there is given room for these types of reflections, though, the opposition against Russian aggression is explicit.

The op-ed titled *Europe is burning - the political left must have new answers* claimed that “The decisive axis in Russia’s war against Ukraine is not east against west - it is dictatorship against democracy”. The aforementioned articles *Putin unites the west* also highlight the political ideological conflicts at play in this war and claim that since Russia is an external authoritarian threat, it makes Europe more conscious and firm in their emphasis on democratic values. In addition, the article *This is why there’s a war now* claim that the initial stages of the war is a fork in the road for Ukraine and is decisive for how it would be treated throughout the war.

Despite that much of the reporting does indeed touch upon topics that concern freedom and democracy as European values, little space is given to actually reflect and discuss on these topics explicitly. The findings give nonetheless pointers to a future debate reminiscent of the ideologically bipolar cold war narratives.

Taking a European perspective rather than national

The most common theme throughout the sample from VG, found in 10 articles, was the narrative of the war from a European perspective rather than a Norwegian one. This included the portrayal of the war as a threat to all of Europe and the general focus of the consequences of the war on Europe from a pan-European perspective. Though there were frequent references to Norway's national interests, the overall perspective in the 10 articles emphasised the threat this war has to all of Europe, including Norway. The article *The day that changed Europe* included quotations such as from the Norwegian prime minister "Today we woke up to war in Europe", and by the general secretary of NATO "We now have war in Europe on a scale we thought believed in history". These emphasise the European narrative of the war throughout VG's reporting, but it also give pointers to a larger national narrative of the European nature of this war since they are direct quotation from high profiles in Norway.

VG started as a tabloid newspaper and has through time evolved to be an easy access to information for the average newsmedia consumer. They use easily comprehensible language and often simply observe events without including too many analyses. This might explain why reporting on what this war mean ideologically is limited. As Norway is not an actively participant in the war, the Norwegian narrative is put to the side and the Ukrainian perspectives are highlighted instead.

It is important to clarify that the national and European narratives do not exclude each other, but coexist and build on each other. Many articles follow the same composition where the European perspective is provided and then the Norwegian narrative is provided at the end. For example, "UN: Over two millions have fled Ukraine" explains the refugee crisis that stood at the doorstep of Europe, then it ends the article with explaining what consequences this has for Norway specifically. In this way, VG is able to provide a European narrative whilst also maintaining national interests.

Discussion/Analysis (Nikos)

Our research has shown that VG, AD and Proto Thema promoted European identity in quite similar manners despite originating from three countries with very different relationships with Europe. European solidarity and unity against Russia was the dominant theme in all three media, though the ways in which this was conveyed differed greatly. The formation of a common "we" is employed in the articles through the media's narrative and strengthens the identification with a collective European identity (Mouffe, 1995). By including 'we' in the solution, it pushed forward an idea that European solidarity and collective action are part of the solution to make Ukrainian lives better during the war and, ultimately, help end the war. It provides the 'we' or 'us' with immediate legitimacy and relevant political power to defeat an "unpredictable" and "aggressive" foreign threat (Olausson, 2010). The legitimacy of this narrative depends, however, on the symbolic production of European identity. It provides a sense of shared responsibility.

On the contrary of the united “we”, many scholars have highlighted that concurrent construction and exclusion of the ‘other’. Throughout our sample, the alienation of Russia was an integral part of the pan-European narrative, which deepened the cleavage between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Olausson 2010, p. 143-144). Gehring (2021) argued that the external military threat posed by Russia during the invasion of the Crimea peninsula in 2014 caused a significant increase in shared identity within the EU. Our findings suggest that in their coverage of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Greek media Proto Thema and Norwegian VG, depicted intensively Russia as an external threat to Europe. This could imply that the media plays a vital role in the process of strengthening European identity as the primary source of information for the public by promoting the narrative of a common external enemy. In contrast, the Dutch AD rarely presented Russia as a clear military danger to the European continent, however, there were many indications within the articles pointing to this direction.

The frequent appearance of this two themes in all three media was fundamental for constructing what according to Anderson (1983) is a nationally ‘imagined community’ that is “written into broader transnational vectors of belonging” such as Europe (Bødker, 2019). The patterned ritual reactions in which news media respond to disruptive media events such as the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine thus play a vital role in answering “questions of identity, community and belonging” (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2017). In this case they promoted narratives that aimed to strengthen the European community and therefore, European identity.

Furthermore, another theme we identified was that the newspapers reported from a European perspective rather than a national one. There were many similarities in the coverage of the three news media analyzed also in this category. This was also noted in Olausson’s research on national media coverage of climate change in Sweden (2010). Oftentimes the national and European narratives were integrated in each other. Similarly, our findings show that although the national point of view is sometimes mentioned separately from the European, emphasis is given to these countries’ relevance in a larger European context. These parallel narratives help fuel the complexity of identity as defined by Williams and Piazza (2012). Identities are layered, and in the context of Europe specifically, European identity is not necessarily equivalent to non-identification with the nation-state. As put by Gripsrud, it is rather a question of adding a European ‘layer’ to already established identities, such as national identity (2007, p. 490).

Another way that European identity seems to be promoted was the inclusion of Ukraine as a country that shares European values such as freedom and democracy, tying Ukraine closer to Europe culturally and ideologically. Although it is the least common theme in the articles analyzed, the choice of media to point out these values creates the fundamental base of a common identification of Ukraine with the collective *we*. The construction of a European collective identity “is associated with common characteristics and goals” which touch upon these values (Abdelal et al., 2009; Kaina, 2013). An impression of sharing culture or parts of a culture with others is one of the most important factors in creating a community, imagined or concrete (Polonska-Kimunguyi & Kimunguyi, 2011). Although this theme was not

identified that frequently, it does nonetheless indicate a subtle narrative that aims at binding Ukraine closer to Europe. In fact, Ukraine and Russia share a long history of shared linguistic and cultural traits, but in the context of this war, these similarities are left out of the narrative whilst similarities between Ukraine and Europe are highlighted.

Though the narratives in the newspapers were similar in many ways, we also observed significant differences. Most notably was the differences in the use of images and illustrations. While Proto Thema and AD exclusively used pictures that were taken on-site and used to trigger emotions through depiction of humanitarian aid, refugee crisis and protests, the Norwegian VG uses pictures that deliver explicit messages on a semantic level. The political illustrations were not only supplement, but they added layers of political messages. These messages mostly contribute to the portrayal of Russia and Putin as an enemy of Europe and symbolically depict Europe as united front against a common external threat.

Limitations and Further Research (Nikos and Malene)

Our research naturally suffers from a few limitations. Firstly, it is worth noting that we selected the 3 most popular digital newspapers from Greece, the Netherlands, and Norway, and they are not be representative of the full range of media outlets available in these countries. According to the 2022 Reuters digital news report in Netherlands and Norway, public audiovisual broadcasters like NOS and NRK respectively are still dominant news sources while in Greece the majority (71%) of online users receive the news every week from social media. Therefore, other forms of media could possibly be further researched to uncover all the nuances of the coverage of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine regarding the promotion of European identity.

Secondly, according to data from the 2022 Reuters Digital News Report, there is a big difference in the overall trust in the news media in Greece, the Netherlands and Norway. Citizens in both Norway and the Netherlands trust the media at 57% and specifically trust the VG and AD at 70%. In contrast, in Greece the overall trust in the national media is only at 27%, the third lowest in the ranking. Trust in Proto Thema is at 41%. Therefore, the three newspapers have widely different real-life implications and influences on how its readers understand the war through the newspapers. Our methodology does not provide any tools to understand these differences. We therefore suggest that future research aim to understand our findings from the perspective of the reader. In this way we can grasp how the mechanism studied in this paper influences the audience's identity, particularly European identity.

Thirdly, the mere promotion of European identity by the media does not necessarily mean that it will impact the readers' identity in a more European manner. The audience's public opinion and attitudes are determined at an individual level and are subject to a that include predispositions, pre-existing values, and beliefs, political awareness, engagement with the news topic that is covered, exposure to alternative sources of information, etc. (Zaller, 1992). As explained in our literature review, this is one of the greatest challenges with studying identity. However, Polonska-Kimunguyi and Kimunguyi (2011) emphasised that media has undeniably a strong impact on identity formation, and it is therefore fair to assume that a

strong European narrative in the media makes the audience feel more connected to their European identity over time.

Lastly, our research has exclusively analysed newspaper narratives in three European countries, yet we have analysed it from a European perspective. Though three countries give a diverse range of perspectives across Europe, it could never cover the nuances across the entire continent. Our paper lacks perspectives from Eastern Europe and the south-west particularly. More extensive and nuanced research on this topic is needed in order to grasp the details of how national media construct a European identity through the coverage of the invasion of Ukraine.

Conclusions (Malene)

This study has sought to explain what mechanisms national media in Greece, the Netherlands and Norway used in order to construct a European identity through its reporting on the full scale invasion of Ukraine between 24 February and 9 March 2022. We collected 25 articles from the most read online newspapers in each the three countries. We then carried out a thematic analysis to identify how journalists construct a European narrative in the the two first weeks following the invasion. Our findings suggest that Proto Thema, AD and VG all construct a pronounced and explicit pan-European narrative of the war, particularly with a focus of creating a united front in solidarity with Ukraine against Russia. VG was the newspaper with the strongest European narrative whilst Proto Thema focused relatively much on maintaining national narratives.

Our findings should be studied in a greater context of trends of European identity to understand why we are seeing such a pronounced regional narrative across Europe. How come three widely read newspapers from three different countries in Europe share this narrative? In order to answer this question more holistically, future research should aim to replicate our study using other case studies. In combination with our study, these studies can make up a broad overview of how the European narrative looks like and therefore understand what this is a symptom of. This will open up a discussion on public opinion, identity formation, and national versus regional interests.

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Appendix 1:

These tables each provides the extensive list from the newspapers (VG, AD and Proto Thema) used in our study.

VG (Norway)

	Translated title	Original title	Date published	Link
1	<i>This is why there's a war now</i>	<i>Derfor er det krig nå</i>	Feb 24th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/34w8WM/derfor-er-det-krig-naa
2	<i>The government imposes temporary collective protection for Ukrainian refugees</i>	<i>Regjeringen innfører midlertidig kollektiv beskyttelse til flyktninger fra Ukraina</i>	March 4th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/66gdzr/regjeringen-innfoerer-midlertidig-kollektiv-beskyttelse-til-flyktninger-fra-ukraina
3	<i>Stoltenberg: - We now have war in Europe on a scale we believed belonged to history.</i>	<i>Stoltenberg: – Vi har nå krig i Europa i et omfang som vi trodde hørte historien til</i>	Feb 24th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/Qy2vp8/stoltenberg-vi-har-naa-krig-i-europa-i-et-omfang-som-vi-trodde-hoerte-historien-til
4	<i>Ukraine to Russia in the security council – Stop spreading lies.</i>	<i>Ukraina til Russland i sikkerhetsrådet: – Slutt å spre løgner</i>	March 4th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/QyBKvV/ukraina-til-russland-i-sikkerhetsraadet-slutt-aa-spre-loegner
5	<i>Ukrainan government: Russian troops have seized control over Europe's biggest nuclear power plant</i>	<i>Ukrainske myndigheter: Russiske styrker har tatt kontroll på Europas største atomkraftverk</i>	March 4th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/66gy4e/ukrainske-myndigheter-russiske-styrker-har-tatt-kontroll-paa-europas-stoerste-atomkraftverk
6	<i>This is how the security situation in Europe could change</i>	<i>Slik kan sikkerhetssituasjonen i Europa endres</i>	Feb 25th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/0GJA5o/slik-kan-sikkerhetssituasjonen-i-europa-endres

7	<i>MDG: Give 1500 [NOK] billions to Ukraine</i>	<i>MDG: Gi 1500 milliarder til Ukraina</i>	March 10th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/28IMKG/mdg-g-i-1500-milliarder-til-ukraina
8	<i>Modovan President: We need help quickly</i>	<i>Moldovas President: Vi trenger hurtid hjelp</i>	March 6th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/G3ggjq/moldovas-president-vi-trenger-hurtig-hjelp
9	<i>“It’s serious now. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine brings Europe into a new era. A dangerous era where no European can roam for granted.”</i>	<i>«Det er alvor nå. Russlands invasjon av Ukraina bringer Europa inn i en ny tid. En farlig tid, der ingen europeer kan ta freden for gitt.»</i>	Feb 24th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/nWPqJ5/krig-i-europa
10	<i>A refugee crisis that connects Europe</i>	<i>En flyktningkrise som samler Europa</i>	March 8th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/nWJqno/en-flyktningkrise-som-samler-europa
11	<i>Ukrainians are fleeing the country – Observing a refugee flow</i>	<i>Ukrainere rømmer fra landet: – Ser en flyktningstrøm</i>	Feb 25th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/66vgAL/ukrainer-e-roemmer-fra-landet-ser-en-flyktningstroem
12	<i>Norwegian war expert fear that Russians will leave Kyiv in ruins</i>	<i>Norsk krigsekspert frykter at russerne vil legge Kyiv i ruiner</i>	Feb 28th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/0G1K0E/norsk-krigsekspert-frykter-at-russerne-vil-legge-kyiv-i-ruiner
13	<i>NRK (Norwegian National Broadcaster) about Eurovision Song Contest: A completely new situation with two competing countries at war</i>	<i>NRK om Eurovision Song Contest: Helt ny situasjon med to deltagerland i krig</i>	Feb 24th	https://www.vg.no/rampelys/musikk/i/0GJR2M/nrk-om-eurovision-song-contest-helt-ny-situasjon-med-to-deltagerland-i-krig
14	<i>Circulated by</i>	<i>Omfavnnes av</i>	March 9th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/

	<i>gass-thirsty Europeans</i>	<i>gass-tørste europeere</i>		utenriks/i/1O3mbe/omfavnes-av-gass-toerste-europeere
15	<i>Europe is burning – the political left must have new answers</i>	<i>Europa brenner – venstresiden må ha nye svar</i>	March 1st	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/a7BJr5/europa-brenner-venstresiden-maa-ha-nye-svar
16	<i>Putin unites the West</i>	<i>Putin samler vesten</i>	March 1st	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/y4n67g/putin-samler-vesten
17	<i>The Day that Changed Europe</i>	<i>Dagen som endret Europa</i>	Feb 24th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/pWEypV/dagen-som-endret-europa
18	<i>Jonas Gahr Støre: - We woke up to a Europe at war today</i>	<i>Jonas Gahr Støre: – I dag våknet vi til krig i Europa</i>	Feb 24th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/66vOee/jonas-gahr-stoere-i-dag-vaaknet-vi-til-krig-i-europa
19	<i>UN: Over two millions have fled Ukraine</i>	<i>FN: Over to millioner har flyktet fra Ukraina</i>	March 9th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/7dg85K/fn-over-to-millioner-har-flyktet-fra-ukraina
20	<i>Must prevent a greater war</i>	<i>Må hindre en større krig</i>	March 8th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/qWwIXO/maa-hindre-en-stoerre-krig
21	<i>Putin chose the worst</i>	<i>Putin valgte det verste</i>	Feb 27th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/66gi3Q/putin-valgte-det-verste
22	<i>Expert: This is what the war could mean for Norway</i>	<i>Ekspert: Dette kan krigen bety for Norge</i>	March 7th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/z73oj9/ekspert-dette-kan-krigen-bety-for-norge
23	<i>Lithuania's President to VG: - Nobody in Europe can feel safe</i>	<i>Litauens president til VG: – Ingen i Europa kan føle seg trygge</i>	Feb 28th	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/eEBekR/litauens-president-til-vg-ingen-i-europa-kan-foele-seg-trygge
24	<i>Do not exclude the</i>	<i>Utelukker ikke</i>	March 3rd	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/

	<i>idea of sending more weapons to Ukraine</i>	<i>flere norske våpen til Ukraina</i>		innenriks/i/OrBz6E/utelukk-er-ikke-flere-norske-vaape-n-til-ukraina
25	<i>- A mass escape we barely have seen in the past decades</i>	<i>– En masseflukt som vi knapt har sett maken til de siste tiårene</i>	March 2nd	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/i/EagyMA/en-masseflukt-som-vi-knapt-har-se-ett-maken-til-de-siste-tiaare-ne

Proto Thema (Greece)

	Translated title	Original title	Date published	Link
1	<i>EU - Ukraine: European Commission President in favour of Ukraine's EU membership</i>	<i>ΕΕ - Ουκρανία: Η πρόεδρος της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής τάσσεται υπέρ της ένταξης της Ουκρανίας στην ΕΕ</i>	Feb 28th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1216704/e-e-oukrania-i-proedros-tis-europaikis-epitropis-tasse-tai-uper-tis-edaxis-tis-oukranias-stin-ee/
2	<i>Invasion of Ukraine: These are the countries sending weapons and aid - NATO announcement</i>	<i>Εισβολή στην Ουκρανία: Αυτές είναι οι χώρες που στέλνουν όπλα και βοήθεια - Η ανακοίνωση του NATO</i>	Feb 27th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1216636/ei-svoli-stin-oukrania-autes-einai-oi-hores-pou-stelno-un-opla-kai-voitheia-i-ana-koinosi-tou-nato/
3	<i>Invasion of Ukraine: Anger in Athens over the 10 dead expatriates - Russian Ambassador to explain today</i>	<i>Εισβολή στην Ουκρανία: Οργή στην Αθήνα για τους 10 νεκρούς ομογενείς - Για εξηγήσεις σήμερα ο Ρώσος Πρέσβης</i>	Feb 27th	https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/1216480/ei-svoli-stin-oukrania-orgi-stin-athina-gia-tous-10-n-ekrous-omogeneis-gia-exigiseis-simera-o-rosos-pre-svis/
4	<i>The Greek Parliament is illuminated with the flag of Ukraine - Photo</i>	<i>Με τη σημαία της Ουκρανίας φωταγωγείται η Βουλή των Ελλήνων - Φωτό</i>	Feb 26th	https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/1216417/me-ti-simaia-tis-oukranias-fotagogeitai-i-vouli-ton-ellinon/
5	<i>Large gathering at</i>	<i>Μεγάλη</i>	March 1st	https://www.protothema.gr

	<i>the Constitution against the Russian invasion of Ukraine</i>	συγκέντρωση στο Σύνταγμα κατά της ρωσικής εισβολής στην Ουκρανία		r/greece/article/1217452/megali-sugedrosi-sto-sudagma-kata-tis-rosikis-eisvolis-stin-oukrania-deite-video/
6	<i>Arvanitis' controversial words about the Russian invasion - Strong reactions from the New Democracy party and internet users</i>	Μισόλογα Αρβανίτη για τη ρωσική εισβολή - Έντονες αντιδράσεις από ΝΔ και χρήστες του διαδικτύου	Feb 24th	https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/1215718/misologa-arvaniti-gia-ti-rosiki-eisvoli-edones-adidraseis-apo-tous-hristes-tou-diadiktuou-kai-ti-nd/
7	<i>Ukraine: giving birth in shelters, singing the national anthem - Thousands of refugees</i>	Ουκρανία: Γεννούν στα καταφύγια, τραγουδάνε τον εθνικό ύμνο - Χιλιάδες οι πρόσφυγες	Feb 26th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1216217/oukrania-tragoudane-ton-etniko-umno-sta-katafugia-paidakia-perimenoun-na-teleiosoun-oi-vomvardis-moi/
8	<i>War in Ukraine - Poll: 51% support Ukraine, 15% give Russia the benefit of the doubt</i>	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία - Δημοσκόπηση: 51% υποστηρίζουν την Ουκρανία, 15% δίνουν δίκιο στη Ρωσία	March 8th	https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/1219611/polemos-stin-oukrania-dimoskopisi-nai-stis-kuroseis-sti-rosia-leei-to-63-ton-ellinon/
9	<i>War in Ukraine - Zelensky's dramatic message to the West: help us to endure and not surrender</i>	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία - Δραματικό μήνυμα Ζελένσκι στη Δύση: Βοηθήστε μας για να αντέξουμε και να μην παραδοθούμε	March 5th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1218774/polemos-stin-oukrania-dramatiko-minuma-zelenski-sti-dysi-voithiste-mas-gia-na-adexoume-kai-na-min-paradothoume/
10	<i>War in Ukraine: Romania and Portugal send military equipment</i>	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία: Στέλνουν στρατιωτικό εξοπλισμό Ρουμανία και	Feb 27th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1216565/polemos-stin-oukrania-enisxuoun-me-stratiotiko-exοπλισμο-roumania-kai-portogalia/

		Πορτογαλία		
11	<i>War in Ukraine: the first refugees and Greek expatriates in Athens</i>	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία: Στην Αθήνα οι πρώτοι πρόσφυγες και Έλληνες ομογενείς	Feb 27th	https://www.protothema.gr/greece/article/1216580/polemos-stin-oukrania-stin-athina-oi-protoi-prosfuges-kai-ellines-omogeneis/
12	<i>War in Ukraine: the aircraft carrier "Charles de Gaulle" left Cyprus - Its planes will fly over Romania</i>	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία: Το αεροπλανοφόρο «Σαρλ ντε Γκολ» έφυγε από την Κύπρο - Τα αεροπλάνα του θα πετούν πάνω από τη Ρουμανία	March 4th	https://www.protothema.gr/greece/article/1218730/polemos-stin-oukrania-to-aeroplano-foro-sarl-de-gol-efuge-apo-tin-kupro-ta-aeroplana-tou-tha-petoun-pano-apo-ti-roumania/
13	<i>War in Ukraine: the closure of EU airspace to Russia announced by the President of the Commission</i>	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία: Το κλείσιμο του εναέριου χώρου της ΕΕ για την Ρωσία ανακοίνωσε η πρόεδρος της Κομισιόν	Feb 27th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1216644/polemos-stin-oukrania-to-kleisimo-tou-enaeriou-horo-u-tis-ee-gia-tin-rosia-anakoinonei-i-proedros-tis-komision/
14	<i>Russia: Threatens European Union with 'tough response' to sanctions</i>	Ρωσία: Απειλεί την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση με «σκληρή απάντηση» για τις κυρώσεις	March 1st	https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/1217427/rosia-apeilei-tin-europaiki-enosi-me-skliri-apadisi-gia-tis-kuroseis/
15	<i>In Ukrainian the message of Charles Michel: "Glory to Ukraine"</i>	Στα ουκρανικά το μήνυμα του Σαρλ Μισέλ: «Δόξα στην Ουκρανία»	Feb 27th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1216690/sta-oukranika-to-minuma-tou-sarl-misel-doxa-stin-oukrania/
16	<i>The fountain of Omonia and Technopolis in the colours of Ukraine</i>	Στα χρώματα της Ουκρανίας το σιντριβάνι της Ομόνοιας και η	Feb 25th	https://www.protothema.gr/greece/article/1216140/sta-hromata-tis-oukranias-ta-sidrivani-tis-omonoias-

		Τεχνόπολη		kai-i-tehnopoli-deite-foto-grafies/
17	<i>In Putin's hand the use of nuclear weapons - How the West "reads" the threats</i>	Στο χέρι του Πούτιν η χρήση πυρηνικών - Πώς «διαβάζει» τις απειλές η Δύση	March 1st	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1217154/sto-heri-tou-poutin-i-hrisi-purinikon-mono-i-amesi-paradosi-tis-oukranias-tha-aposovouse-ton-kinduno/
18	<i>Invasion of Ukraine: Sunday was the worst day of the war for the Russians to date</i>	Εισβολή στην Ουκρανία: Η Κυριακή ήταν η χειρότερη ημέρα του πολέμου για τους Ρώσους, μέχρι σήμερα	February 27th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1216632/eisvoli-stin-oukrania-i-kuriani-ita-i-heiroti-imeratou-poleμου-gia-tous-rous-mehri-simera/
19	<i>Konstantopoulou on the Russian invasion of Ukraine: did we forget something? Did we forget something?</i>	Κωνσταντοπούλου για τη ρωσική εισβολή στην Ουκρανία: Μήπως κάτι ξεχάσαμε; Δυσλολία για την Ειρήνη	March 4th	https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/1218738/konstadopoulou-gia-ti-rosiki-eisvoli-stin-oukrania-mipos-kati-xehasame-duo-logia-gia-tin-eirini/
20	<i>EU - Ukraine: European Commission President in favour of Ukraine's EU membership</i>	ΕΕ - Ουκρανία: Η πρόεδρος της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής τάσσεται υπέρ της ένταξης της Ουκρανίας στην ΕΕ	Feb 28th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1216704/e-e-oukrania-i-proedros-tis-europaikis-epitropis-tasse-tai-uper-tis-edaxis-tis-oukranias-stin-ee/
21	<i>War in Ukraine: Refugees from Ukraine now exceed 2 million</i>	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία: Ξεπέρασαν σήμερα τα 2 εκατομμύρια οι πρόσφυγες από την Ουκρανία	March 8th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1219678/polemos-stin-oukrania-xeperasan-simera-ta-2-ekatomuria-oi-prosfuges-apo-tin-oukrania/
22	<i>War in Ukraine: Even Switzerland "broke neutrality" to sanction Russia</i>	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία: Ακόμα και η Ελβετία «έσπασε» την	March 1st	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1217157/polemos-stin-oukrania-akoma-kai-i-elvetia-espase-ti

		ουδετερότητα για να επιβάλει κυρώσεις στη Ρωσία		n-oudeterotita-gia-na-epivalei-kuroseis-sti-rosia/
23	War in Ukraine: children and civilians bombed in Sumy	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία: Βομβάρδισαν παιδιά και αμάχους στη Σούμι	March 8th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1219585/polemos-stin-oukrania-h-exodos-ki-o-tromos-ton-oukranon-grafei-i-liberation/
24	War in Ukraine: Dramatic images of dead civilians in the streets from the shelling	Πόλεμος στην Ουκρανία: Δραματικές εικόνες με νεκρούς πολίτες στους δρόμους από τους βομβαρδισμούς	March 6th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1219212/sok-kai-deos-stin-oukrania-vomvardismo-se-katoikimenes-periohes-dramatikes-eikones-nekron-amahon-stous-dromous/
25	Invasion of Ukraine: These are the countries sending weapons and aid - NATO announcement	Εισβολή στην Ουκρανία: Αυτές είναι οι χώρες που στέλνουν όπλα και βοήθεια - Η ανακοίνωση του NATO	February 27th	https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1216636/eisvoli-stin-oukrania-autes-einai-oi-hores-pou-stelnon-opla-kai-voitheia-i-ana-koinosi-tou-nato/

AD (The Netherlands)

	Translated title	Original title	Date published	Link
1	Masses of people protest worldwide against Russia's invasion of Ukraine	Massa's mensen protesteren wereldwijd tegen de Russische invasie van Oekraïne	February 27th	https://www.ad.nl/buitenland/massa-s-mensen-protesteren-wereldwijd-tegen-de-russische-invasie-van-oukraine~acaace31/
2	Reactions to war in Ukraine: 'Are we all going to watch the Russians invade Kiev?'	Reacities op oorlog in Oekraïne: 'Gaan we nu allemaal zitten toekijken hoe de Russen Kiev	March 3th	https://www.ad.nl/opinie/reacties-op-oorlog-in-oekraïne-gaan-we-met-zijn-allen-toekijken-hoe-de-russen-kiev-binnenvallen~af6a9d95/

		<i>binnenvallen?</i>		
3	<i>Heroic citizens try to stop Russian tanks with bare hands</i>	<i>Heldhaftige burgers proberen Russische tanks met blote handen tegen te houden</i>	February 26th	https://www.ad.nl/buitenland/heldhaftige-burgers-proberen-russische-tanks-met-blote-handen-tegen-te-houden~a3507e1f/
4	<i>If Putin tells a lie about Ukraine, what is the honest story?</i>	<i>Als Poetin een leugenachtig verhaal over Oekraïne vertelt, wat is dan het eerlijke verhaal?</i>	February 26th	https://www.ad.nl/buitenland/als-poetin-een-leugenachtig-verhaal-over-oekraïne-vertelt-wat-is-dan-het-eerlijke-verhaal~a56fb4c5/
5	<i>Business, sport and culture: Russia gets 'cancelled' massively</i>	<i>Bedrijfsleven, sport en cultuur: Rusland wordt massaal 'gecanceld'</i>	March 5th	https://www.ad.nl/buitenland/bedrijfsleven-sport-en-cultuur-rusland-wordt-massaal-gecanceld~a984dd72/
6	<i>Europe prepares for refugee wave from Ukraine</i>	<i>Europa maakt zich op voor vluchtelingenstroom uit Oekraïne</i>	February 24th	https://www.ad.nl/buitenland/europa-maakt-zich-op-voor-vluchtelingenstroom-uit-oekraïne~acd636e5/
7	<i>Joyce volunteers to go to Ukraine to fight: 'My children are sad and angry'</i>	<i>Joyce gaat vrijwillig naar Oekraïne om te vechten: 'Mijn kinderen zijn verdrietig en boos'</i>	March 3rd	https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/joyce-gaat-vrijwillig-naar-oekraïne-om-te-vechten-mijn-kinderen-zijn-verdrietig-en-boos~a78edc8f/


8	<i>At least 100,000 Ukrainians already fled: most to Poland and Romania</i>	<i>Zeker 100.000 Oekraïners al gevlucht: meesten naar Polen en Roemenië</i>	February 25th	https://www.ad.nl/buitenland/zeker-100-000-oekraïners-al-gevlucht-meesten-naar-polen-en-roemenie~a344c0f0/
9	<i>Helping Ukrainians in need: what are the rules for taking in a refugee?</i>	<i>Oekraïners in nood helpen: wat zijn de regels voor het in huis nemen van een vluchteling?</i>	March 3rd	https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/oekraïners-in-nood-helpen-wat-zijn-de-regels-voor-het-in-huis-nemen-van-een-vluchteling~ac063b60/
10	<i>Gas price shoots up over 40 per cent after Russian attack</i>	<i>Gasprijs schiet met ruim 40 procent omhoog na Russische aanval</i>	February 24th	https://www.ad.nl/economie/gasprijs-schiet-met-ruim-40-procent-omhoog-na-russische-aanval~aa805ae5/
11	<i>Chamber: Still to invest extra in Defence this Cabinet term</i>	<i>Kamer: Nog deze kabinetsperiode extra investeren in Defensie</i>	February 28th	https://www.ad.nl/politiek/kamer-nog-deze-kabinetsperiode-extra-investeren-in-defensie-br~ad67304c/
12	<i>John Lennon peace song echoes across Europe for Ukraine</i>	<i>Vredeslied John Lennon klinkt in heel Europa voor Oekraïne</i>	March 4th	https://www.ad.nl/show/vredeslied-john-lennon-klinkt-in-heel-europa-voor-oekraïne~a51ccb12/
13	<i>Biden: 'Amerika stands up against bullies, we defend freedom'</i>	<i>Biden: 'Amerika verzet zich tegen pestkoppen, we verdedigen vrijheid'</i>	February 25th	https://www.ad.nl/buitenland/biden-amerika-verzet-zich-tegen-pestkoppen-we-verdedigen-vrijheid~a77edb96/

14	<i>Despite flight ban, cargo flight from Schiphol to Moscow anyway: 'Can't stop it'</i>	<i>Ondanks vliegverbod toch vrachtlucht van Schiphol naar Moskou: 'Kunnen we niet tegenhouden'</i>	March 3rd	https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/ondanks-vliegverbod-toch-vrachtlucht-van-schiphol-naar-moskou-kunnen-we-niet-tegenhouden~a832f454/
15	<i>Visit royal couple to Greece postponed again, this time due to Ukraine war</i>	<i>Staatsbezoek koningspaar aan Griekenland weer uitgesteld, nu door Oekraïne-oorlog</i>	March 8th	https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/staatsbezoek-koningspaar-aan-griekenland-weer-uitgesteld-nu-door-oekraïne-oorlog~a38245a4/
16	<i>Jetten: The Netherlands prepares for Russian gas tap to be closed</i>	<i>Jetten: Nederland bereidt zich voor op dichtdraaien van Russische gaskraan</i>	March 8th	https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/jetten-nederland-bereidt-zich-voor-op-dichtdraaien-van-russische-gaskraan~ac4756de/
17	<i>Sanctions against Russia push The Netherlands into recession</i>	<i>Sancties tegen Rusland duwen Nederland in recessie</i>	March 8th	https://www.ad.nl/geld/sancties-tegen-rusland-duwen-nederland-richting-recessie~a608c730/
18	<i>Krimpen wants to host some 75 refugees in old music school and boarding school</i>	<i>Krimpen wil zo'n 75 vluchtelingen opvangen in oude muziekschool en in een internaat</i>	March 9th	https://www.ad.nl/rotterdam/krimpen-wil-zon-75-vluchtelingen-opvangen-in-oude-muziekschool-en-in-een-internaat~a63d107d/
19	<i>Already hundreds of Ukrainian refugees in Rotterdam: 'It's going very fast now'</i>	<i>Al honderden Oekraïense vluchtelingen in Rotterdam: 'Het</i>	March 8th	https://www.ad.nl/rotterdam/al-honderden-oekraïense-vluchtelingen-in-rotterdam-het-gaat-nu-heel-snel~aee09b0d/

		<i>gaat nu heel snel'</i>		
20	<i>Where is the limit of help we can offer refugees?</i>	<i>Waar ligt de grens van hulp die wij vluchtelingen kunnen bieden?</i>	March 8th	https://www.ad.nl/buitenland/waar-ligt-de-grens-van-hulp-die-wij-vluchtelingen-n-kunnen-bieden~ae402335/
21	<i>Cabinet goes into crisis mode over war in Ukraine: 'All hands on deck' for refugee reception</i>	<i>Kabinet gaat in crisistand om oorlog in Oekraïne: 'Alle hens aan denk' voor opvang vluchtelingen</i>	March 8th	https://www.ad.nl/politiek/kabinet-gaat-in-crisistand-om-oorlog-in-oekraïne-alle-hens-aan-dek-voor-opvang-vluchtelingen~a70c4bec/
22	<i>Pasta crisis looms in Italy: 'I still have stock for a month, then it will be gone'</i>	<i>Pastacrisis dreigt in Italië: 'Ik heb nog voor een maand voorraad, dan is het op'</i>	March 2nd	https://www.ad.nl/koken-en-eten/pastacrisis-dreigt-in-italie-ik-heb-nog-voor-een-maand-voorraad-dan-is-het-op~a0422c09/
23	<i>Where can we shelter if the port is targeted? 'Shelters are often more damaging than outside'</i>	<i>Waar kunnen we schuilen als de haven doelwit is? 'Schuilkelders zijn vaak schadelijker dan buiten'</i>	March 2nd	https://www.ad.nl/rotterdam/waar-kunnen-we-schuilen-als-de-haven-doelwit-is-schuilkelders-zijn-vaak-schadelijker-dan-buiten~a5f15228/
24	<i>Rotterdam port possible target if war expands, thinks MEP</i>	<i>Rotterdamse haven zou mogelijk doelwit kunnen zijn als oorlog zich uitbreidt, denkt Europarlementariër</i>	March 1st	https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/rotterdamse-haven-zou-mogelijk-doelwit-kunnen-zijn-als-oorlog-zich-uitbreidt-denkt-europarlementarier~a1400b80/

25	<i>Fire brigade from Hedel and Brakel supports colleagues in Ukraine: 'Nice to see that our old suits are already being used'</i>	<i>Brandweer uit Hedel en Brakel steunt collega's in Oekraïne: 'Mooi om te zien dat onze oude pakken al gebruikt worden'</i>	March 1st	https://www.bd.nl/bommerwaard/brandweer-uit-hedel-en-brakel-steunt-collegas-in-oekraine-mooi-om-te-zien-dat-onze-oude-pakken-al-gebruikt-worden~a0f06eb1/
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Re: Academic paper proposal



From Cecilia Arregui Olivera <ca@cc.au.dk>

To Malene Solheim <202203373@post.au.dk>, 202203410@post.au.dk <202203410@post.au.dk>, 202203408@post.au.dk <202203408@post.au.dk>

Date 2023-04-04 12:58

Dear Malene, Nikolaos, and Sebastiaen,

Following the submission of your final exam proposal for JMCG 2023 and our subsequent discussions during the individual supervision session, I am writing to inform you **that the academic part of your final exam project has been approved**. Further to stipulations in the study regulations, please remember to attach a copy of this email to your final exam essay as an appendix.

Good luck with the exam.
Best wishes,

Cecilia

From: Malene Solheim <202203373@post.au.dk>
Date: Monday, 27 March 2023 at 13.42
To: Jesper <jg@DMJX.dk>, Cecilia Arregui Olivera <ca@cc.au.dk>
Cc: 202203410@post.au.dk <202203410@post.au.dk>, 202203408@post.au.dk <202203408@post.au.dk>
Subject: Academic paper proposal

Dear Cecilia and Jesper,

Please find our research proposal attached to this e-mail.

Wish you both a pleasant sunny Monday!

Best regards,

Nikos, Sebas and Malene

Reflection report

by

Malene Solheim: au722838@uni.au.dk

Sebas van Aert: 202203410@post.au.dk

Nikolaos Goudis: 202203408@post.au.dk

Exam in Journalism, Media and Cultural Globalisation

Date of Submission: 07.05.2023

Supervisors: Cecilia and Jesper

Link: <https://paneuropeanmedia.mediajungle.dk/>

Password: paneuropean

Total character count: 11.899

1. Why-question

Why is youth-initiated pan-European media on the rise?

2. Motivation

We have identified that people aged 20-35 years old are creating a new wave of pan-European media. These media outlets, magazines, and networks of young European professionals look at European affairs from a European rather than a national angle. Their coverage is beyond European Union affairs that originate in Brussels and one of their trademarks is to highlight European solidarity and collective action as essential to solve an increasing number of region-wide issues. A big part of them are innovative in form and modalities in which they operate and address the audience. This constitutes an interesting and new-by-nature phenomenon, and we wanted to explore what this trend may be a symptom of.

3. Chosen media outlet

We think the following media outlet is appropriate for publishing our explainer:

Euronews.

Why [Euronews](#)? It is the most established news media outlet addressing an European audience with high credibility. Their agenda addresses pan-European issues, similar to our explainer. Our only concern about using Euronews is that there may be a conflict of interest.

4. Existing media coverage and deliberative value

The deliberative value of our piece can be summarized through the following argumentative schedule:

Explanations rise youth-initiated pan-European media

1. Europe is more than EU
2. Growing European audience
 - 2.1 Rise in European identity
 - 2.1.1 Growing up in a unified Europe
 - 2.1.2 Erasmus generation
 - 2.1.3 Online connections
 - 2.1.4 Emerging external threats
 - 2.2 Higher proficiency in English
3. Technological advantages
4. Global forces at play
 - 4.1 Political and economic unification
 - 4.2 Climate crisis

The above shows that our journalistic product is made up of multiple arguments and (sub)subarguments, constituting together different explanations of the rise in young pan-European media and making it a deliberative whole.

After consultation with our supervisor, we have concluded that we will not provide an issue frame table because the topic is divergent in nature. During our research, no other media outlet came up that had paid attention to this phenomenon. As far as we know, we are the first ones to identify this novel trend of pan-European media. There are therefore no dominate issue frames.

5. The creative abductive inference table

1. Observation (Y-observation)	Youth-initiated pan-European media is on the rise
2. Explanatory theory (X-theory) à (Y-theory)	<p>Theory 1: Inclusion of non-EU countries in European debates. As argued by Julius Fintelmann: “The future of Europe lies there [non-EU Europe), especially in Eastern Europe. To not include them is to miss out on all the interesting events and stories that will take place in the coming twenty years.”</p> <p>Theory 2: There is a growing European audience. More people depend on understanding Europe from a transnational perspective for business, education, transportation, finance etc. These people tend to be younger and perpetual users of social media, which reflects the nature of these pan-European media.</p> <p>Theory 3: Technological developments (e.g. instagram or twitter) have made the threshold lower for giving voices to low-budget outlets.</p> <p>Theory 4: Movement across the continent has significantly increased. Erasmus programme initiated by the EU has since 1987 funded students for their exchange elsewhere in Europe.</p> <p>Theory 5: External threats increases the feeling of shared responsibility and a united front (Gehring 2021). By having a shared enemy, Europe needs to have shared</p>

	solutions, facilitating cooperation across the continent (e.g. Russian invasion on Ukraine, covid-19, climate crisis).
3. Hypothesis of case at hand (X-theory) à (Y-observation)	The rise of European youth media is part of a general trend of Europeans feeling more European and at a closer proximity to the rest of Europe.

6. The context table

Base case(s): The case at hand can be understood in a broader context of the recent wave of regional cooperation in Europe within many different fields. The case at hand should be understood as a consequence of the base cases. The pan-European narrative is a result of the demand created by the base cases.		Case at hand Youth-initiated pan-European media is on the rise	
Feature	Evidence (data, source)	Feature	Evidence (data, source)
EU initiatives to strengthen solidarity	https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en Youth Corps programme by the EU https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/ Erasmus+ Programmes by the EU	There's been a rise of pan-European media in the past decade. These are often, but not exclusively, initiated by young Europeans (journalists, activists).	The Europeans - Podcast by young European journalists Are We Europe - European magazine ENTR - Youth-initiated pan-European news media outlet

			SPHERA - Instagram account The European Correspondent - recently launched through a daily newsletter
Youth Associations spread across the region to promote academic collaboration between European youth	European Association of Archeologists European association of Social Psychology European Association of Psychology and Law		
Activist groups promote European solidarity and collaboration against regional issues	Environment: Youth Environment Europe Politics: European Democracy Youth Network		
Conventional news media narratives promote European solidarity, particularly as a response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.	The EU promote European values against the invasion: https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/index_en BBC article from Feb 2023: "Ukraine war: Europe fights to maintain solidarity" https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64637091 The Guardian editorial article on: "The Guardian view		

	<p>on Russian gas: a threat to European solidarity”</p> <p>https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/28/the-guardian-view-on-russian-gas-a-threat-to-european-solidarity</p> <p>Modern Diplomacy’s article on: “Russian Invasion: Why collective responsibility is not so collective”</p> <p>https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/03/06/russian-invasion-why-collective-responsibility-is-not-so-collective/</p>		
Pan-European political parties	Volt		

7. Critical discussion and clarification academic insights.

In the academic part, we have discussed Benedict Anderson’s theory of ‘imagined communities’. He describes ‘imagined communities’ as communities that are imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”. He goes on to describe the role of media in such imagined communities as crucial as they construct this community through their celebration of national heroes or events but also through their ritual value - the whole country used to read the newspaper at a fixed moment in time, namely every morning - creating a “mass ceremony” that results into some sort of national belonging and identity.

In our journalistic product we take Europe as our imagined community. It can be qualified as one because the average Dutch person does not know, has never met or seen all of his fellow Europeans, be it Greeks, Italians or Ukrainians. Hence, the groundwork is there for Europe to be an imagined community. We believe it is not yet one because the feeling of communion

amongst Europeans is still razor-thin. Unlike European nation states like Switzerland, Austria and France, that are well-established imagined communities, 'Europe' as an imagined community is still in progress, as not all Europeans feel as European as they feel for example Belgian or Norwegian.

The fact that it is a growing imagined community makes it a particularly interesting case for us. The role of media is extra important in this start-up phase, in constructing and promoting this community sense as the idea of a community is still under construction. That is why we have decided to focus on these young pan-European media initiatives as they are a crystal clear signal of media trying to create and form an identity that goes beyond mere national perspectives. It is also telling that these media outlets are driven by young people.

Apparently, amongst this generation there is a need to foster the European identity to, in the end, make Europe - so not just the EU - a strong imagined community present in the minds of all Europeans.

8. Critical assessment journalistic product.

The biggest strength of our article are the arguments being introduced that altogether really make it a deliberative whole. We have found 4 strong explanations that provide a solid argumentative basis for why we have seen a rise in youth-initiated pan-European media. Two of them are even deepened with sub explanations that render the arguments more cogent. We also believe they are written quite clearly and are distinguishable while reading the article.

The quality of our explanations is also strengthened by the variety in sources we have spoken to. They give the piece body and contribute to the credibility of it. We have spoken with a person involved in one of these media initiatives, who gave us a good insight in the ins and outs of starting such a pan-European media and who knows the media landscape better than we did. We also talked to a professor who was not a media professor but an expert on external threats. This made for a good divergent angle of our article. Indeed, more dialogue sources would have improved our piece even more (we would have loved to talk to a media expert or another person involved in these pan-European media) but that is well taken care of through the amount of trustworthy non-dialogue sources we have used.

The biggest weakness of the product is that the phenomenon we are trying to explain is not super clear. Other than questions about apparent observations like "why are leaves green" or "why do airplanes fly" our observation of youth-initiated pan-European media on the rise is not that clear-cut. The biggest doubt we initially had was whether this upsurge in these type of media was real, and whether it was significant. We identified five media platforms that matched our profile, but it was unclear to us whether that was a strong enough group to really give it the qualification of a new thing in European media world.

We also weren't sure if it could be separated from other pan-European media like Euronews or Politico, who had already entered the European media stage earlier on. In the end, we did find some factors that helped us in demarcating our phenomenon from these other early media outlets. Firstly, we found out that all these media outlets had been founded within the

last ten years, creating a clear distinction with the other pan-European media that emerged in the early 2000s. Also, the media we analyzed are driven by young Europeans, mostly twentysomethings, whereas editors of other European media were usually all above thirty.

Another weakness might be that our topic is less relevant for a general audience, but more so for other journalists, who love reading about their own profession. You could ask yourself whether Europeans are really interested in this youth movement that still has to find its place in the European media landscape. Still, we think it is relevant - especially for readers of Euronews and The Guardians This Is Europe section. Those platforms already have an Europe-minded audience so it is likely they are also interested in reading about the European identity. After all, the article revolves less around media and more around European belonging.

9. Individual contribution to journalistic product and the reflection report

Sebas: research, interview with Julius Fintelmann, reflection report except for the tables, wrote majority of journalistic product

Nikos: research, interview with Kai Gehring, transcription of interview, wrote “external threats” part in the explainer

Malene: context table, attended interview with Julius Fintelmann, brainstorming and research.

10. Source list (does not count as part of the character limit for the reflection report), see below for further information.

Dialogue sources

1. Julius Fintelmann (co-founder of The European Correspondent / +31 6 27211225 / Zoom call)
2. Kai Gehring (professor of political economy at the University of Bern, researcher / mail@kai-gehring.net / 0041 44 634 50 91 / Zoom call)

Non-dialogue sources

1. Mick ter Reehorst (co-founder of Are We Europe / September 2021 / [Podcast episode](#))
2. European Commission ([press release](#) / 28 January 2020)
3. Caroline de Gruyter (Dutch columnist writing on European affairs / February 27, 2023 / [Foreign Policy](#))
4. European Barometer ([press release](#) / January 2023)

Critical assessment

1. Julius Fintelmann: we interviewed Julius because he is a co-founder of The European Correspondent and we believed he could provide us with some good inside information on why there had been a gradual upsurge in such pan-European media. First and foremost he explained us why he founded The European Correspondent which in itself already contained quite some reasons for the rise. These reasons are

trustworthy because they are personal and they come directly from someone involved in these outlets. It is quite likely they can be applied to the other media because they share the same philosophy. Simultaneously, you can wonder if what he said was not just to promote himself and his company - especially considering it is still a start-up so they can use some attention. But in the end, that is just a win-win; he is not spreading misinformation, he just shares his journalistic ideas with us, which doesn't do any harm to either of us.

2. Kai Gehring: we chose to interview Mr. Gehring because of his general academic interest and research in European identity. His research "External Threats and Group Identity" regarding the initial Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014 provided us with one of the main theories to explain the rise of pan-European media. We highly believed that an interview with him would provide us with valuable insights that would help us understand this phenomenon, especially because he is looking at it from an external perspective and doesn't have any personal interests involved. Besides, he is a professor in political economy connected to the University of Bern, so this topic was right up his alley. With a PhD in political economy in his backpack it is safe to assume his expertise on this topic.
3. Mick ter Reehorst: he was interesting for us because he is the co-founder of Are We Europe, one of the pan-European media we analyzed. Just like Fintelmann, he is sharing his personal thoughts on the world of journalism which to us comes across as fairly genuine. But him saying the "European audience is on the rise and growing as we speak" is of course a statement we should take with a grain of salt. He, as someone who would benefit from a bigger European audience, can set in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy by saying this. Maybe the European audience is not that big in reality and this statement will just help it grow - as people like to become part of a group.
4. European Commission: this contained a press release from the European Commission, whose publications, due to its key position in European society and accompanying responsibility, you may expect to be true. At the same time they might have exaggerated their numbers of participants because they want to show off their self-initiated project was a huge success. Unfortunately, there is no way to check this.
5. Caroline de Gruyter: she is a Dutch columnist writing for Dutch quality newspaper NRC and quality European/foreign media Euobserver and Foreign Policy. She has a good track record and as a Europe correspondent she is always very well-informed about things happening in the European Union.
6. European Barometer: we consider this a fairly credible source because it is the European Union doing a public opinion poll every once in a while where they ask Europeans by phone or email what they currently think of the EU. Apart from lurking statistical errors this generally is quite an accurate representation of what persons of EU member states think of the EU. Besides, it is usually picked up by other serious media too.